An (Un)Marked Foreigner: Race-Making in Egyptian, Syrian, and German Popular Cultures

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ABSTRACT   This essay negotiates the critical tension between race as an analytic and social construct by examining how race becomes socialized in and through the production and presentation of Arab culture in two ethnographic case studies: how Syrian musicians negotiate musical multiculturalism as they integrate into German society and how independent musicians in Egypt navigate the racialized entanglements of national and international security logics that privilege Western foreigners. Both these case studies center the "foreigner" subject as one who embodies proximity to white power and delimits the boundaries of such power. We argue that the category of foreigner is thus a racialized construct that not only complicates the Black–white binary of race relations but strategically evades explicit discourses and practices of racecraft that are violent, discriminatory, and exclusionary. By provincializing critical race theory through the particularities of Arab lived experience, we illustrate how local social categories are entangled with historic legacies of empire and contemporary global logics of racialized difference while remaining sensitive to how conceptions of difference exceed Euro-American categories of race. Our work therefore directs attention towards alternative enactments of racialization within the Global South.

KEYWORDS   anti-Blackness, Arabness, asylum, Egypt, foreigner, Germany, multiculturalism, music, race, Syria, white privilege

Critical debates on difference in Arab-majority societies tend to reinforce a silence around the concept of race, either as an analytic for understanding contemporary social life in the Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA) region or as a local set of practices, discourses, and subjectivities. This silence is arguably due to an anxiety around the projected unsuitability of race as a historical force and discursive construct, considered by many to be foreign to lived experience in the region—as well as anxieties about the ethics of appropriating the historically specific contexts for anti-Black racism that are particular to Western societies.[1] At the same time, recent work has appealed for studies situated in Arab-majority societies to engage with critical race theory, particularly but not limited to the construction of blackness, and to contribute to anthropological theorizing about race and ethnicity more generally. Lara Deeb and Jessica Winegar propose that though racial ideologies and categories may be hidden or denied, their potential unmasking can reveal crucial roles in the constitution of difference in Arab-majority societies, including how race intersects with class, gender, ethnicity, nation, and religion.[2]

In this essay, we seek to negotiate this critical tension between race as an analytic and a social construct by looking at race-making processes and discourses in contemporary

Arab experiences. Racial constructions are often problematically predicated on an Euro-American binary of whiteness and Blackness that masks colorism and that essentializes whiteness and Blackness rather than situates these constructions in relation to specific temporal and geographic contingencies.[3] Discourses of race are further complicated in Arabic-speaking societies in which the term *al-ʿunṣūrriyya* (lit. racism) refers to a broad constellation of violent and unequal practices and structures that tend to blur the appearance of racism with that of discrimination. The latter is often based on ethnic or sectarian difference and arguably fails to explicitly address the perpetuation of anti-Black racism. To better distinguish the lived experience of racism from that of discrimination, we aim to situate *al-ʿunṣūrrīyya* in and across social categories, especially (non)whiteness and (non)Blackness, and in relation to nationality, ethnicity, and language.

This essay engages with the experiences of artists and cultural producers located in Egypt, and displaced Syrian musicians integrating into German society. We account for the ways that our interlocutors racialize others, often within the context of their "home" societies, as well as the ways they become racialized through encounters stemming from migration, travel, and other processes of mobility.[4] We foreground the tensions between colorism as a distinct racialized experience, Arabness as a particular ethnic construct, and, perhaps most significantly for our interlocutors' experiences, the cloaking of race by other categories of difference that emerge in part from European colonial legacies and in part from histories considered more indigenous to the region.[5] To this end, we historicize racialized difference in relation to empire-making and colonial processes that have and continue to impact the region while remaining sensitive to how conceptions of difference exceed these Euro-American categories.

We further recognize where, when, and how critical race studies has traveled in order to address the gaps, contradictions, and instabilities of what Jemima Pierre calls "racecraft," or "the contemporary legacy and impact of European empire making on . . . the design and enactment, practice, and politics of race making."[6] Approaching postcolonial spaces as invariably racialized, we ask whether and how racialized experiences shape and are shaped by cultural practices among our interlocutors in their Arab-majority countries of origin as well as the Arab-minority societies in which they dwell. One of the primary social categories that emerges in our consideration of race-making discourses and practices is that of foreignness, which we approach as a racialized process of exclusion and/or privilege. Fatima El Tayeb argues, in the context of Afro-Deutsch experiences in twentieth-century Germany, that when difference is constituted as foreign, it often reinforces taboos on race in public discourse.[7] As a result, "pseudo-scientific, biologist theories [of race] that originated in the late nineteenth century" persist, perpetuating understandings of race as natural form rather than social construct.[8] Through ethnographic case studies of cultural practices in Egypt, Syria, and, more recently, Germany, we explore the effects of this silence, including in the ways the designation of foreigner grants some communities exceptional privilege while for others it serves as the basis for a naturalized form of citizenship that perpetuates the borders of racial governance.[9] Our work therefore interrogates the colonial geographies and histories of racecraft, resituating race-making in contemporary global relations of power and directing attention towards alternative enactments of racialization within the Global South.

Our two case studies engage with racialized experiences of Arab difference in contemporary cultural practices with a focus on the structural forces that shape these experiences. Shayna Silverstein draws on fieldwork conducted in Berlin to examine how displaced Syrian musicians strategically position themselves and their repertoire within the

broader discursive politics of multiculturalism and German national culture. Focusing on *MultiKulti* music-making as a space in which Syrian musicians are perceived as "white" and "foreign," she argues that social actors strategically (dis)identify with the racialized and enculturated subject-positions that constitute Syrianness. Importantly, they draw on their lived experience of multiculturalism within modern Syria to navigate these as strategic essentialisms and reconfigure Syrianness. Darci Sprengel's examination of independent music in contemporary Egypt demonstrates how the Egyptian state's logics of security intertwine with and reinforce global securitization practices in ways that privilege certain Western foreigners. She suggests that "security" is a global and local logic of racecraft and questions how the privileging of "the foreigner" (*al-agnabī*) intersects with historical prejudices against Africans and those with dark skin in Egypt, as well as perpetuates global logics privileging whiteness. Together, these ethnographic case studies center the "foreigner" subject as one who embodies proximity to white power and delimits the boundaries of such power. We argue that the category of foreigner is a racialized construct that not only complicates the Black-white binary of race relations but strategically evades explicit discourses and practices of racecraft that are violent, discriminatory, and exclusionary. By provincializing critical race theory through the particularities of Arab lived experience, we illustrate how local social categories are entangled with historic legacies of empire and global logics of racialized difference, and argue that race becomes socialized in and through the production and presentation of Arab culture.

Generally, popular culture and musical expression are central to making visible, tangible, and public otherwise hidden or marginalized ideas, discourses, and experiences. Musical practices are particularly well-situated to address the question of race not only because music is often an embodied experience, but because of how embodiment is complicated by race.[10] Though artists are often privileged in their mobility to travel, whether physically across political borders or through the circulation of recorded sound, as Sprengel details, it is also through the political economy of music production, which necessitates travel due to the paucity of local opportunities and resources, that racialized borders are strictly and violently enforced. Furthermore, cultural imaginaries more often than not realize values of socio-cultural inclusion, particularly through the rhetoric of multiculturalism, as Silverstein discusses. Despite some recognition among Arab studies scholars of how global and transnational cultural production are racialized processes,[11] there remains a general ambivalence in the field towards race in general. By untangling race from other local conceptions of difference, and by tracing how social actors variously privilege, reproduce, and (dis)identify with notions of race, we work through this ambivalence as it manifests in lived realities.

We likewise recognize the work that remains to be done in order to decenter European and North American formulations of race. More research is needed, for instance, to tackle the unique history and specificity of the concept of *al-ʿunṣūrrīyya* in the region as well as the question of how it might uphold anti-Black racism. Our interrogations here stem from our long-term ethnographic engagement with interlocutors in the region that, although previously not focused explicitly on race, made obvious the extent to which race and racialization are crucial aspects of contemporary lived experience. Oftentimes, our own positionalities as female, non-Arab, US-trained ethnographers refocused our attention on race in unanticipated ways as we navigated the local realities of daily life in relation to our interlocutors. We thus offer the following as preliminary engagements that only begin to untangle the complex relations between racism, discrimination, colorism, and Arabness in the SWANA region and beyond while we continue to develop more focused studies on

local meanings and processes of racialization beyond dominant Euro-American conceptions.

MultiKulti Music-Making in Syrian Berlin

"People make space for you if they like what you do," explains oud player and close friend Wassim Mukdad. Describing what draws him to musicking in Berlin, he continues, "I love the poetry of jam sessions, and all the 'MultiKulti,'" adding a hand gesture in reference to the particularities of multiculturalism in Berlin. "MultiKulti is part of Berlin's 'liberal extremism;' gender plays a part, too, and the hipsters. I feel comfortable and open here."[12] When Mukdad first arrived in Berlin in 2015, he began playing with the Babylon Orchestra, an intercultural ensemble launched as "a cultural response to the migration crisis" that "challenges ourselves" through "encounters with foreign cultures."[13] The Babylonian metaphor resonates in a landscape of fatigued metaphors for musical interculturalism. Berlin's intellectual elite have long imagined their city as an oasis for those in exile and turned to Babylon as a metonym for exile. With a core ensemble of approximately ten musicians and a larger network of performers who rotate in and out of performances, Babylon Orchestra musicians contribute repertoire through participatory processes of "multicultural exchange and dialogue" that fuse "oriental music with classical and jazz elements."[14] The multicultural ethos of the orchestra is arguably premised on a culturalist binary of "Oriental" and "Occidental" forms by which musicians purportedly contrast "ourselves" with "foreign cultures," a vague gesture of self and Other that reveals the unmarked status of whiteness in German.

The Babylon Orchestra is indicative of the ways that multiculturalism as a strategic tactic is leveraged through music performance and production. MultiKulti music-making in Berlin thrives as a mode of labor, marketing strategy, and intercultural aesthetics that aims to incorporate immigrants into Germany. The inclusion of Syrians in cultural projects, for instance, challenges Islamophobic discourse that portrays Middle Eastern asylum seekers as either male terrorists who pose an external threat to German society or female victims of religious oppression. Instead, MultiKulti discourse celebrates Middle Eastern artists as exceptional subjects whose artistic contributions purportedly transcend gendered conditions of domination and oppression in their societies of origin. Yet because MultiKulti music-making produces and constructs difference, it is complicit in masking systems of discrimination grounded in racial, ethnic, and religious divisions. Moreover, discourses on discrimination tend to not tackle race, instead slipping past structures of anti-blackness in the course of constructing foreignness.[15] MultiKulti music-making is therefore a rich site for exploring the main question of this essay, that is, the absence of race and colorism as discursive categories in contexts of discrimination in which Otherness is marked as foreign. Here, I compare and contrast German MultiKulti production with Syrian modes of multiculturalism in order to tease out the politics of racecraft in the production of musical difference as foreign.

Though the presence of Syrian musicians for German audiences of MultiKulti music-making was perceived as foreign, multiculturalism itself was not new terrain for Syrian musicians, many of whom had strategically negotiated the politics of musical diversity during their performing careers in Syria. The Syrian state actively promoted cultural diversity and tolerance through increased arts programming in the late 2000s. From folk festivals that celebrate internal differences in the name of national unity, to the invocation

of the "mosaic" as a metaphor for cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity across the Syrian nation, national imaginaries have historically been premised on the recognition of religious, ethnic, and geo-cultural heterogeneity within Syria's boundaries. The neoliberal reform of the late 2000s reasserted these forms of difference as a driver for individual opportunities and freedoms.

Like multiculturalism elsewhere, Syrian policies of multiculturalism tend to mask discrimination, which more often than not occurs along sectarian lines. Consider, briefly, the appeal of Joussour (lit. bridges), a music ensemble founded by Salah Ammo in 2007 in prewar Syria. Composed of musicians from Arab, Kurdish, Armenian, and Syriac Christian backgrounds, each bring to the ensemble their musical traditions and repertoire, moving fluidly across folkloric, contemporary, instrumental, and vocal genres in order to stage musical multiculturalism. Yet their concerts harbor risk. The expression of Kurdish culture is generally repressed within Syria because the regime considers Kurdish political autonomy a perpetual threat to the security of the regime.[16] Despite or likely because of these precarious conditions, Joussour vaults Kurdish performance culture to the stage. Joussour works strategically in tandem with cultural and political institutions, who sanction this celebration of an ethnic and linguistic minority that is actively discriminated against and persecuted by the state. Joussour exemplifies the risks and dangers of multiculturalism—that cultural diversity remains a rhetorical act that is dissonant yet contemporaneous with ethnic discrimination and persecution.

The perpetuation of difference between and among Syrians continually (re)constitutes a space structured by the cultural logics of empire, including racecraft.[17] Though difference in Syria is generally constituted along axes of religion, ethnicity, and locality, rather than race and color, the general tendency to project a certain social identity onto individuals and distribute or remove privileges and benefits based on that social identity reinforces what Yassin al-Haj Saleh racializes as the "white" and "Black" divide of Syrian sectarianism.[18] In his account of sectarianism and the Assadist regime, al-Haj Saleh draws on whiteness and Blackness not as lived social categories but as a discursive binary that maps hierarchies of power, wealth, and privilege onto "Western First World" (white) and "Eastern Third World" (Black) subject-positions that differentiate Syrians from each other. Though Al-Haj Saleh's racial framing of discrimination helpfully marks Orientalism and its internal effects within Syrian society, his efforts to link sectarianism to whiteness and Blackness through imported constructions of race, rather than local categories of difference, reinforces the untranslatability of anti-Black racism as lived experience. Nevertheless, racecraft continues to structure the ways that the state has historically tried to abate sectarianism in the public domain through its purported support of religious and ethnic minorities within the Syrian polity. Known as minoritarianism, this support legitimates the political domination of a particular minority group, the Alawite, and purportedly assures other minorities of protection against persecution.[19] In the broader context of minoritarianism and sectarianism, multiculturalism as a public expression of difference can be considered a thin rhetorical front that aspires towards diversity as national imaginary but in fact sustains the racialized dynamics of sectarianism, minoritarianism, and statecraft.

In Germany, the flaunting of difference as a constituent part of nation-building can be traced to at least the late 1990s, when young Black reggae and hip-hop artists gained visibility for works that expressed their experiences of belonging and alienation in Germany.[20] It is hardly a prescriptive category, but rather one which musicians, promoters, and audiences alike deploy to articulate a certain vision of German collectivism, a vision

grounded in debates on Germany identity, ethnicity, and nationalism that emerged in West Germany in the late 1970s.[21] These debates dovetailed concerns over national identity with long-standing issues of labor and immigration regarding the status of "guest workers," many of whom were Turkish migrant laborers. The binary distinction between foreigners and Germans that fueled these debates was and continues to be deeply entwined with the intellectual history of the concept of "*Volksgeist*" (lit. folk spirit), which can be traced to Johann Gottfried Herder's early theories of nationalism that foregrounded "*Kultur*" (culture, culturalism) as that which bound communities into an ethno-national collective. Multicultural policies in the 2000s generally embraced imaginaries of Germany as an immigration nation, in which citizenship is granted in terms of soil *and* blood. Multiculturalism birthed critics, however, not least of whom was, famously, German Chancellor Angela Merkel. In 2010 Merkel pronounced MultiKulti a failure, recognizing, as a head of state speaking to debates on immigration, that neighbors were *in fact not* living side-by-side with each other and enjoying each other's company.

These frictions have increased since 2015 as Syrians living in Germany are often visibly marked as non-German.[22] One young man from Eastern Syria commented resentfully about negative perceptions of his skin tone among white Germans in the small town in which he lived. He shared that he dresses sharply because "Germans treat me like I don't belong. It's as if there is something wrong with me . . . I have darker skin." Yet in contradistinction to his experience, many Syrian artists acknowledge that they benefit from the privilege of being perceived as "white," whether when spending leisure time in predominantly white German spaces or onstage at music events. Likewise, some non-Syrian immigrants feel that Syrians receive preferential treatment by Germans because they are perceived as white in comparison to Black immigrants.[23] Others disidentify with race as a marker of their Syrianness, arguing that public perceptions of Syrian difference are driven more by markers of religion (Islam), language, and place-based origin. Each of these ambivalent responses to whiteness, blackness, and racialized in-betweenness negotiates what El-Tayeb argues is a continental European discourse of normative whiteness and colorblindness that paradoxically refuses to see visible markers of racialized difference and yet situates these markers as external to Europeanness.[24]

These complex dynamics speak to the contradictions of *Willkommenskultur* ("welcoming culture"), a fleeting moment that lasted approximately two to three years, during which Germany received asylum seekers with attention to how Germany and Germans might benefit from the perspectives, assets, and skills of "newcomers" rather than pursue their socio-economic integration or flame nativist and xenophobic discourses. *Willkommenskultur* also aimed to counteract gendered Islamophobic constructions of Arab and Muslim men as terrorists, or "bad Muslims," who threaten religious and political norms. Though *Willkommenskultur* initially offered unique opportunities for dialogue and engagement, particularly in cultural spaces, it was ultimately beset by the racialization of Syrians as foreign and resentment of the distribution of resources afforded by *Willkommenskultur*.

During this welcoming period, *orientalische musik* emerged as a discursive and performative space in which Syrian musicians navigated the embodied politics of difference, particularly the construction of foreignness through MultiKulti music-making. Mostly male Syrian musicians joined existing ensembles, collaborated with established musicians, and launched new projects in Berlin's thriving culture industry of MultiKulti music.[25] While they performed across music scenes, including electronic dance music, the most active space for visible Syrian participation was that of "orientalische Musik" (lit.

Oriental music; "Eastern" music, in contradistinction to "*Abendland*" or "*Okzident*," i.e. Western cultural forms).[26] "Oriental music" tends to be adapted as a constitutive element of an intercultural project, and "Oriental music" ensembles are often presented at festivals and programs that evoke a multicultural ethos.

At a June 2017 performance by the Babylon Orchestra that I attended in Berlin, the orchestra played a set of *orientalische Musik* at a reception for a conference titled "*Bildung für die Demokratie*" (Education for Democracy) that celebrated the founding of the August Bebel Institute.[27] The institute generally aligns with the Social Democratic Party and promotes political education, cultural exchange, and dialogue to strengthen democracy. From the organizers' perspective, the Babylon Orchestra was an exemplary instantiation of these political ideals, particularly cultural exchange and dialogue, at a time of heated debates on immigration, cultural pluralism, and diversity in Germany. The event organizers seemingly leveraged multiculturalism as a strategic tactic for the promotion of the Social Democratic Party of Germany through their celebration of the Bebel Institute.

< https://csalateral.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Figure-1-Shayna-Silverstein-1.jpg>

From right: Wassim Mukdad (oud) and Valentina Bellanova (ney) perform with the Babylon Orchestra at the Bebel Institute in Berlin, Germany. June 15, 2017. Image by author.

Towards the end of the event, the founder of the Babylon Orchestra, Mischa Tangian, introduced the musicians: "Wassim Mukdad on oud, from Syria; Michael Glucksmann on

guitar, from Israel; Valentina Bellanova on ney and recorder, from Italy; myself on violin, from Germany though I was born in Russia; Romeo Natur on percussion, from Palestine." During the last introduction, I noticed a look pass over the percussionist's face. I asked Wassim about this when we met up a couple of days later. "Oh that!" He laughed. "Yes, Mischa does that frequently. He considers himself German because though he was born in Russia, he grew up here. Yet he introduces certain others as non-German no matter where they were born or raised. The 'Palestinian' musician is born and raised in Germany, same with the Turkish musician. You know this mentality, where are you *really* from."

In short, Mischa framed each member of the ensemble according to their "country of origin," without articulating the specific historicity of migration patterns that might trouble the notion of a "country of origin." In so doing, the musicians embodied foreignness within Germany, despite several having been born and raised in Germany. As El-Tayeb has argued for in the context of *Afro-Deutsch* histories, the category of foreigner is a facile mask for overt racism, which each of these musicians has certainly experienced in musical spaces and daily life.[28] While the Babylon Orchestra is hardly the only musical act to utilize these identity categories, it is striking because the orchestra promotes itself as "a response to the multicultural crisis" yet reproduces the problematic logic of multiculturalism wherein diversity exoticizes and essentializes at the expense of lived experiences with racism. The presence of "foreign" and gendered bodies performing musical labor underscores how difference is presented, produced, and embodied as visible and sonic Others through musical performance. This difference, suggests Michael O'Toole, "is the very basis upon which dialogue and exchange can and ought to take place."[29] When this difference is affixed to static notions of ethnicity, nation, and culture, it becomes a site for the reproduction of social hierarchies in which Germanness remains unmarked and invisible.

Yet Wassim remains mostly untroubled by this logic. He "believes in the Babylon concept, of multiple languages, of trying to sort through encounters between musical cultures, of Mesopotamia" as a reference point. But moreover, he admires Mischa's ability to network with institutions, musicians, and others in the industry. "I've received a lot of gigs through Babylon," he shares. Though Wassim is ambivalent about the logic of multiculturalism, especially when musician identities are essentialized and exoticized, he is also pragmatic about the benefits of institutional connections that he gains through his multicultural labor. Multicultural music-making is a site of encounter where these histories become embodied, articulated, and socialized into consumable forms of difference that are always already racialized.

What this comparative discussion of multiculturalism in Syria and Germany suggests is that local experiences of multiculturalism are not bound to the particulars of difference and the discursive spaces in which they are constructed. Rather, global configurations of identity, culture, and empire structure the production and performance of difference in ways that trace back to colonial forms of domination. The construction of Syrian difference in Berlin's MultiKulti music scene is therefore not only a narrative of migration wherein race is encountered upon the arrival of an asylum seeker into the West. Rather, what I have suggested here is that racial and ethnic forms of difference dwell in spaces structured by broader transnational histories of postcolonialism and imperialism, histories that circulate across Ottoman, French, Syrian, and German spaces. These spaces more often than not reproduce whiteness as an invisible social category through embodied performances of non-whiteness and foreignness in ways that continually reconfigure the social relations of racecraft.

Security as Racemaking in the Egyptian Independent Music Scene and Beyond

In his efforts to build a successful independent band among both an Egyptian and regional Arabic-speaking audience, one of my close friends is required to travel frequently to perform and organize gigs.[30] Unfortunately, his birth name is exactly the same as a man wanted for "terrorism." Whenever we get together in Cairo, he recounts his latest ordeals in traveling. At airports he is often interrogated for hours in a small room, sometimes missing his flight. He routinely has problems getting visas. The constant harassment he endures is not only on flights to North America and Europe, but also when he travels to other Arab capitals such as Amman, Beirut, and Dubai. In May 2018, upon returning from a gig, a musician in his band was detained upon arrival at the Cairo airport and imprisoned indefinitely without charge. This case is not unique. The policing of Egyptian artists, and of Egyptians generally, has reached unprecedented levels since 2013. But the Egyptian state does not act alone. Instead it is one part of a much larger, global apparatus that shapes the independent arts scene in Egypt through a racialized logic of "security."

Independent arts are those that largely exist without sustained state patronage or support from the multinational commercial industry. Often highly politicized by the Egyptian state, these arts are primarily funded by entities based outside of Egypt. The cultural branches of embassies such as the American, French, British, and German have traditionally acted as gatekeepers in this scene, providing some of the few small performance venues and limited funding. These entities were especially active after the 2011 revolution, bringing artists and arts managers from abroad to give "expert" performances, talks, and workshops with their counterparts in Egypt. Their cultural programming, largely outside the Egyptian state's control, enjoys more freedom in exhibiting work that otherwise might be deemed too politically risky at Egyptian-run independent venues. Egyptians performing independent music, for instance, are politicized by the Egyptian state and often treated as a security risk. Foreigners from abroad playing music with similar aesthetics, however, are often not. One founder of an independent art space in Cairo told me of his weekly film screenings, "We explore controversial topics like dictatorship but through foreign films and locations such as in Italy. The authorities do not see this as a threat." Whereas Egyptians performing international music styles are regularly denied travel—by both foreign governments who deny visas to Egyptians and the Egyptian state who uses the airport as a military checkpoint to extralegally detain its citizens—foreigners from Western countries easily come and go by obtaining a tourist visa upon arrival at the Egyptian airport.

Extending a technopolitics reminiscent of the colonial era, one assumption entangled in this logic of security is that any shortcomings in the Egyptian cultural sector are due to a lack of local "expertise."[31] One independent filmmaker from Alexandria told me, for instance, "The film scene [here] needs experts from outside to grow it." Some independent musicians likewise send their tracks to be mixed in places such as Athens and Los Angeles because, as a member of one of the most popular independent bands in Egypt told me, "they know what they are doing," implying that Egyptian sound engineers and music producers do not. In short, local and global logics of security intersect to curtail and devalue the capacities of Egyptian musicians while enabling disproportionate opportunities in Egypt for certain "foreigners."

For most Egyptians, these realities have little to do with race. They pertain instead to unequal access to resources and opportunities amid conditions of global inequality.

Sending tracks to be mixed abroad, for example, results in part from a lack of access to the highest quality production equipment and music production training programs in Egypt.[32] But these structures of power index racialized relations and exist in dialogue with global racial identity politics. They privilege certain bodies over others, positioning some as able to move and embody expertise through intersections of nationality, language, ethnicity, and religion, among other aspects.

Anthropologist Jemima Pierre's study of identity in contemporary urban Ghana demonstrates how local discourses and practices engage the global political economy and racialized identity politics, even when race is largely regarded as a non-issue by much of the local population. She draws from Charles W. Mills' concept of "global White supremacy," to argue that the only way to analyze the persistence of white privilege in postcolonial spaces is to consider it within a global framework and in the historical context of empire.[33] Whereas Pierre's study focuses on a dichotomy of whiteness and blackness, the brief examples from Egypt above suggest a blurring of this dichotomy—though not an isolation from it. Foreigners, particularly from powerful Western nations, are afforded a certain privileged status and class standing related to assumptions about potential security risk as well as access to education, knowledge, wealth, and resources. These foreigners are often, but are not exclusively, white. Rather than understand their privilege through a framework of Black and white, then, the designation "foreign" more aptly signals a form of power and privilege that is racialized through its very exclusion of Egyptians and those from less privileged nations or circumstances, including others from the SWANA region, refugees, and sub-Saharan Africans.

Following Pierre and El-Tayeb, I examine the notion of "the foreigner" (*al-agnabī*) to question how local and global logics of security in Egypt intersect with, though are not reducible to, both a global privileging of whiteness and a local aversion in Egypt toward dark skin. If the designation "foreigner" is a mask for racism in Germany, as El-Tayeb argues and as Silverstein's ethnography above demonstrates, in Egypt it similarly operates as a marker of difference but one that suggests a proximity to certain types of globalized power. This power manifests as a privileged class standing associated with expertise and an exemption from much of the scrutiny and brutality of security, allowing freedom of movement and a heightened platform from which to disseminate one's knowledge and/or art, among other benefits. In the privileging of certain foreign bodies, the Egyptian state is entangled in global racial logics, extending these processes of racemaking within Egypt's borders and among its own citizens. Although *al-agnabī* is not coterminous with Euro-American conceptions of whiteness, it intersects with, and at times perpetuates, global white supremacy. It extends the structures of power of dominant Western nations, whose economic infrastructure and regimes of governance emerged from and continue to adhere to notions of white superiority. In Egyptian independent arts spaces, the racialization of security affords foreigners, and especially those from powerful Western countries, privileged status such that many Egyptians require or prefer closeness and collaboration with them over others. Rather than indicating an uncritical adherence to the global privileging of whiteness, however, the privileging of the "foreigner" allowed Egyptian cultural programmers to skirt the limitations of the Egyptian state's policing and to have access to particular mobilities and resources that would otherwise be out of reach for them. This is perhaps the persistent power of global white privilege—it can be perpetuated without the wholesale adoption of its logic.

Although recognizing that it is absolutely crucial to go beyond a Black/white dichotomy, my limited focus on global whiteness and local conceptions of darkness (*asmar/samra*) here

stems in part from my own positionality as a white American woman. This positionality overexposed me to experiences and discussions of white Euro-American foreignness and left me less privy to those surrounding other types of foreigners (Asian, South American, Black American, and so on). This brief ethnography is thus only a preliminary study intended to question how a conception of race might help us globally connect the realities of contemporary life in Egypt in new ways.

One way to understand how security logics maintain racialized relations of difference within Egypt is to connect Arab homeland and diaspora. In the West, the Egyptian state's extralegal imprisonment of Egyptians is often ignored as exceptional—Egypt's authoritarian regime is presumed to be a "local" problem. However, inequality regarding who is and is not deemed a security "threat" manifests through local and global configurations of power. In the United States, for instance, the program of Special Registration, in place from 2002 until 2016, was a system of state-mandated racial profiling of adult males from twenty-four Muslim-majority countries. It led to approximately 14,000 deportation proceedings and the detention of 3,000 persons.[34] Although this policing is treated as entirely separate from that which occurs in Egypt, it is no coincidence that the Egyptian military, which carries out surveillance and extralegal imprisonment of its citizens in Egypt, is the second largest recipient of US aid (after Israel), receiving $1.3 billion every year since 1987. I am not suggesting that Egyptian state policing is *only* an extension of the global "war on terror"; it certainly existed before 2001 and has its own unique history. However, the Egyptian state's own logic of security intertwines with these more globalized ones. Rather than seeing Egyptian policing as only inherent to "authoritarian" and supposedly exceptional regimes, the logic of security is fundamental to so-called democratic and authoritarian regimes alike. One of the ways to understand how local relationships within Egypt are in dialogue with the global political economy and diasporic identity politics may be through treating the concept of "security" as fundamentally racialized.[35]

The racialized nature of Egyptian state security became perhaps most obvious with the torture and murder of Giulio Regini, an Italian PhD student from the University of Cambridge, at the hands of the Egyptian police. Regini's death resulted in an international uproar and self-reflexive shock within Egypt.[36] Many English-language headlines expressed a sense of bewilderment at how something like this could happen.[37] Egyptian NGOs, however, have long documented the state's policy of forced disappearance (*ikhtifa' qasry*). They estimate that three to four Egyptians are disappeared every day under the state's guise of "security" and "counterterrorism." Crucially, there is rarely any widespread international attention given to these disappeared, tortured, and imprisoned Egyptians. The exceptional nature of Regini's murder resembles what Pierre has similarly identified in post-colonial Ghana: Western foreigners—and those who present as white from powerful countries especially—enjoy rights, advantages, and special treatment derived from membership in a particular minority "race." Although this privilege intersects with nationality, the special treatment of certain foreigners in Egypt cannot be explained by nationality alone. Americans in Egypt with dual Egyptian citizenship or those with Muslim or Arab names are sometimes more likely to be monitored and harassed by authorities on suspicions of "spying." Here, it is Regini's foreignness, and I would also argue his whiteness, that makes his death most startling. Similar to the way Arabs and Muslims in the United States are policed with greater intensity than their non-Arab, white American neighbors, so too has it become profoundly normalized that Egyptians are the targets of authoritarian policing—whether in Egypt or abroad—while certain foreigners from powerful countries are largely exempt from the most brutal realities of this policing.

Considering how local and global logics of "security" make possible foreign privilege raises questions regarding how this privilege may intertwine with—and in some cases reinforce—not only global white supremacy but also historical biases against dark (*asmar/samra*) or Black (*iswid/sūda*) skin and African migrants in Egypt. Just this past year there were a number of high-profile cases, including portrayals of blackface, in the mainstream Egyptian media and instances of discrimination against dark-skinned Egyptian women.[38] In one incident, a dark-skinned Egyptian woman was refused service by a pharmacist who told her "I don't take anything from people who are not white."[39] When prejudices against those with dark skin intersect with nationality and/or ethnicity, it has also contributed to outright violence. In 2005, for instance, the Egyptian state used rhetoric of "contagion" and "disease" as justification to violently remove Sudanese refugee protestors, killing at least twenty asylum seekers in what became known as the Mustapha Mahmoud Park Massacre. Scholars and journalists have demonstrated that there is widespread stereotyping in Egypt that links Africans with "disease" (especially HIV/AIDS), crime, and promiscuity or prostitution.[40] Distinct from Euro-American conceptions of anti-blackness, my friends in Egypt who used the term *al-ʿunṣūrrīyya* to describe these incidents insisted that it was not the same as racism in the United States. They told me, for instance, that Egyptian citizens with dark skin were not more likely to be policed than those with light skin. They did not face increased obstacles for employment and, for women, dark skin related more to beauty standards than socio-economic standing. Here, biases against dark skin intersect in complex ways with gender, class, nationality, and ethnicity, and more research is needed to understand how these local biases operate through alternative logics and manifest (or not) toward dark-skinned individuals from more powerful nations.[41]

As scholars have likewise shown, biases in Egypt against sub-Saharan Africans and those with dark skin do not only, or primarily, emerge as a colonial import nor from a contemporary logic of security.[42] Historian Eve Troutt Powell has demonstrated, for instance, how Egyptian imaginaries of the Sudan as "property" and the object of their own "civilizing mission" was fundamental to the development of modern Egyptian nationalism in the nineteenth century.[43] In what she calls "the perspective of the colonized colonizer," she details how Egypt's emancipation from the political and economic control of the British was envisioned through Egypt's unique claim to mastery over the Sudan. Blackface in this context, for instance, takes different meanings. Powell Troutt argues that, unlike in American blackface, stereotypical representations of Black Sudanese and Nubian men as servants, slaves, and buffoons were projections of cultural intimacy and connection. The Sudanese were not an "Other" but a depiction of a pre-independence Egyptian self that was "not quite grown up, not yet evolved."[44] Even if anti-Blackness in Egypt does not take on the same meanings as it has historically in the West, when viewed in terms of global relations of power today, it is likely to reinforce—even unwittingly—a global privileging of lightness, and by extension whiteness, and the special status of some (non-African, non-Arab) foreigners and not others.

< https://csalateral.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Figure-2-Shayna-Silverstein.jpg>

Images from the No Color campaign. Used with permission.

< https://csalateral.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Figure-3-Shayna-Silverstein.jpg>

Images from the No Color campaign. Used with permission.

There seems to be a growing awareness among a new generation that a concept of "racism," *al-ʿunṣūrrīyya*, is useful for understanding social inequality in Egypt. For instance, twenty-three-year-old Maha Hamada, of Nubian descent and dark skinned, started a media campaign in 2017 called "No Color," which encompasses a video, photographs, and a hashtag on social media used thousands of times by individuals to share their stories of colorism and racial prejudice. She got interested in the topic because she noticed

> If a dark woman marries someone lighter, people will make disparaging comments, and especially if a dark woman marries a foreigner [*agnabī*], they will say how could he marry this woman? How could he love her? I found that this was really a pervasive problem, but when I would talk about it with my [light skinned] friends, they wouldn't believe me that it was that pervasive. No one would believe that we had racism [*al-ʿunṣūrrīyya*] here.

It is striking that Hamada views "foreigner" and "dark"-skinned as mutually exclusive. Indeed, African migrants in Egypt are described as *afrīqī,* "African," and rarely described as *agnabī,* "foreign." Popular usage of the word "foreigner" today thus appears to signify a certain proximity to global power that intersects with, though is not reducible to, a proximity to lightness. For Pierre, the desire for lightness occurs in direct relation, and in response, to white and light-skin color privilege and reveals common ideas about the global nature of race.[45]

More research is needed to understand how local conceptions of dark skin (*asmar/samra*) and blackness (*iswid/sūda*) intersect with and diverge from more globalized notions of anti-Black racism in post-independence Egypt, especially with regard to how such prejudices may serve today as means of grappling with the continuing legacies of empire and particularly neoliberal and neocolonial relations that privilege notions of and proximity to whiteness. Local experiences of (im)mobility, security, and access to resources in Egypt are informed by these more global logics that enact processes of racemaking within Egypt. While remaining sensitive to the particularity of historical experience and to the considerable pushback from many in Egypt who criticize a Western impulse to racialize Egyptians as "black" or "African,"[46] taking seriously how local conceptions of difference intertwine with and, in some cases, reinforce global racialized structures of power offers a much needed lens for understanding social life in Egypt today.

Conclusion

Our ethnographic case studies have demonstrated how the construction of foreignness in popular culture masks deeper social structures at play, ones that both perpetuate and are grounded in racialized histories. By presenting some of the complexities and tensions in trying to theorize race in Arab lived experience, we have suggested where and how Arabness may or may not appear as a particular and historically specific ethnic construct in multiracial societies, while also observing tensions between colorism as a distinct racialized experience and race as an unmarked category of exclusion and privilege. The case studies discussed here also make clear the need for future research to explicitly address the question of how gender, as well as class, nationality, and religion, intersects with race and to demonstrate how racial systems of oppression are linked to both global and local structures of power.

What is clear is that racecraft, marked and unmarked, dwells in the interstices of known social categories. The question remains how to theorize the production and contestation of such difference. On the one hand, we have historicized contemporary constructions of foreignness, Arabness, and whiteness by tracing these social categories of difference to historical legacies of colonialism, empire, and nationalism. This allows us to demonstrate that racecraft exists, even if in terms that are more invisible than visible, unmarked than marked, and within discursive categories not typically recognized by critical race theory with its focus on Western societies scarred by racial conflict. On the other hand, as historian Sherene Seikaly urges, our work needs to think more through race not primarily in terms of European colonial legacies but in regional terms. In so doing, we might speak back to what critical race theory has not fully accounted for, namely how to address racemaking in the absence of entrenched histories of racial conflict and discourse. That there remains unresolved questions and domains of research, such as colorism or the materialism of race, attests to the fact that more research on race in Arab lived experience, especially in relation to blackness, is needed.

Recent developments suggest there is a growing awareness and unease among younger generations towards racial politics as it affects them within Egypt and among displaced Syrians adapting to life as minoritized subjects outside of the SWANA region. Hamada's "No Color" campaign has spurred discussions of racism towards those with dark skin in Egyptian media in ways that signal the pervasive ways race is structuring social categories and cultural meanings in Arab popular culture. Critiques of recent portrayals of blackface in mainstream Egyptian television used the word *al-ʿunṣūrrīyya* with specific reference to anti-Black racism, signaling that attitudes towards blackface as largely innocuous have changed since Troutt Powell's study on the topic in pre-independence Egypt. The forced migration of Syrians, within and outside of the SWANA region, likewise raises important questions about how race is performed strategically in shifting transnational geographies of difference. These and other phenomena encourage future research that decenters Europe in ways that nudge race beyond Western-centric discourses and into those already circulating in Arab-majority societies.

Notes

1. Farha Ghannam, *Live and Die Like a Man: Gender Dynamics in Urban Egypt* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013). ⤴

2. Lara Deeb and Jessica Winegar, "Anthropologies of Arab-Majority Societies," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41, no. 1 (2012): 537–558. ⤴

3. Linda Alcoff,*The Future of Whiteness* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2015). ⤴

4. Didier Fassin, "Policing Borders, Producing Boundaries: The Governmentality of Immigration in Dark Times," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40 (2011): 213–226. Sarah Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009). Paul Silverstein, "Immigrant Racialization and the New Savage Slot: Race, Migration, and Immigration in the New Europe," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34 (2005): 363–84. ⤴

5. Sherene Seikaly, "Productive Discomforts: Black-Palestine Solidarity" (talk given at the UC Consortium for Black Studies, UCLA, January 24, 2019). ⤴

6. Jemima Pierre,*The Predicament of Blackness: Postcolonial Ghana and the Politics of Race* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), xii. Pierre's use of "racecraft" is related to but distinct from Karen E. Fields and Barbara G. Fields's use of the same term, in that while both focus on the practice of racism as conditional for the presence of racism, Pierre undertakes a

transnational geography of racecraft, as opposed to Fields and Fields's focus on contemporary American politics and society. ↩

7. Fatima El-Tayeb, *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011). ↩

8. Fatima El-Tayeb, "'If You Can't Pronounce My Name, You Can Just Call Me Pride': Afro-German Activism, Gender and Hip Hop," *Gender & History* (2003): 462. ↩

9. Fassin, "Policing Borders." ↩

10. Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003). Daphne Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850–1910* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006). Nina Sun Eidsheim, *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music* (University of California, 2018). ↩

11. Daniel J. Gilman, *Cairo Pop: Youth Music in Contemporary Egypt,* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014). ↩

12. Personal communication, June 2017, Berlin, Germany. ↩

13. "Babylon Orchestra," accessed December 31, 2019, https://babylonorchester.github.io/ < https://babylonorchester.github.io/> . ↩

14. "Babylon Orchestra." ↩

15. El-Tayeb, *European Others*. ↩

16. Since 1962, Kurdish persons living in Syria have been denied citizenship, the right to hold property, or to serve in government positions, which in prewar Syria constituted approximately thirty percent of the employment sector. ↩

17. Though not discussed in terms of the discursive concept of race, racialized experiences are present in Syrian everyday life, where Syrians typically judge one another on the basis of dialect and phenotype. The pop vocalist Saria al-Sawas, for instance, was debased in public in the late 2000s for her darker complexion and ambiguous dialect that marked her as Other. In another instance, one Black American student who was studying Arabic in Damascus in 2008 came into my apartment visibly shaken. He had been harassed on the street with racial slurs to the extent that he feared an act of violence. ↩

18. Yassin al-Haj Saleh, *Impossible Revolution* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017). ↩

19. The social division of the population into majority-minority groups itself has a historical foundation in empire, namely the late Ottoman empire's millet system that divided populations into confessional groups, French and British empire-making in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the Mandate-era "divide-and-conquer" policy by French colonial authorities that reinforced confessional divisions. Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000. Benjamin Thomas White, *The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East: The Politics of Community in French Mandate Syria* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011). ↩

20. El-Tayeb, *European Others*. ↩

21. Sabine Von Dirke, "Multikulti: The German Debate on Multiculturalism," *German Studies Review* 17, no. 3 (1994): 513–536, https://doi.org/10.2307/1431898 < https://doi.org/10.2307/1431898> . ↩

22. Xenophobic responses to Syrian refugees occur not only in Europe but also among countries that neighbor Syria. In Turkey, Syrian refugees have been labeled "Suriyeli," a pejorative term associated with criminality, poverty, and prostitution, and have been the targets of hate crimes and discrimination. Dogus Simsek, "Anti-Syrian Racism in Turkey," openDemocracy, 2015, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/antisyrian-racism-in-turkey/ < https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/antisyrian-racism-in-turkey/> .

Similar patterns occur in Lebanon, though these are marked by a longer history of labor, occupation, and marginalization. John Chalcraft, *The Invisible Cage: Syrian Migrant Workers in Lebanon*. (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008). ↩

23. Turner writes of similar hierarchies between Syrian and African refugees in the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan, where, due to the colonial hierarchies of race that structure humanitarian work, Syrian "refugee entrepreneurs" are perceived as "closer to whiteness" than African refugees who are perceived as "passive" and "dependent" on relief efforts. Lewis Turner, "'#Refugees can be entrepreneurs too!' Humanitarianism, race, and the marketing of Syrian refugees," *Review of International Studies* 46, no. 1 (2020): 137–8. ↩

24. El-Tayeb, *European Others*. ↩

25. During two visits to Berlin last year, I encountered at least six ensembles (Tarab Taksi, Orphe, Babylon Orchestra, Matar, Fattoush, Kayan Project) that were explicitly multicultural and several more that presented Middle Eastern music in multicultural settings (Berlin Oriental Group, Musiqana, Jamila and the Other Heroes). These numbers have surely shifted since, in the fluid and active cultural spaces of Berlin. ↩

26. Distinct from, but overlapping with "*arabische Music*" (Arab music) and *türkische Musik* (Turkish music), this category broadly encompasses Asian musical cultures, particularly those from former Ottoman territories. In the context of Berlin's vibrant and populous Turkish and Syrian communities, "Oriental" musical repertoire is often comprised of Turkish, Syrian, and Lebanese songs, instruments, and aesthetic forms. ↩

27. The repertoire at this event heavily emphasized folk and traditional songs performed across the Eastern Mediterranean especially Turkey, Syria, and Lebanon, such as "Hijaz Mandra" and a *longa* by Riad al-Sunbati. ↩

28. El-Tayeb, *European Others*. ↩

29. Michael O'Toole, "Sonic Citizenship: Music, Migration, and Transnationalism in Berlin's Turkish and Anatolian Diasporas" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2014), 177. ↩

30. Artists use the Arabic word *mustaqill* (independent) or the English word "independent." ↩

31. Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002). ↩

32. Import taxes on equipment are high and the state does not adequately invest in public education. ↩

33. Pierre, *Predicament of Blackness*, xv. ↩

34. Moustafa Bayoumi, "The Race is On: Muslims and Arabs in the American Imagination," *Middle East Research and Information Project*, 2010, https://www.merip.org/mero/interventions/race < https://www.merip.org/mero/interventions/race> . ↩

35. Pierre, *Predicament of Blackness*, xv; Paul Amar, *The Security Archipelago: Human-Security States, Sexuality Politics, and the End of Neoliberalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013); Alison Howell and Melanie Richter-Montpetit, "Is Securitization Theory Racist? Civilizationism, Methodological Whiteness, and Antiblack Thought in the Copenhagen School," *Security Dialogue* 51, no. 1 (2020): 3–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010619862921 < https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0967010619862921> . ↩

36. Yasmin El-Rifae, "Blog: That Metallic Sound that Hits Us," *Mada Masr*, February 6, 2016, http://www.madamasr.com/opinion/blog-metallic-sound-hits-us < http://www.madamasr.com/opinion/blog-metallic-sound-hits-us> . ↩

37. See for instance Stephanie Kirchgaessner and Ruth Michaelson, "Why was He Killed? Brutal Death of Italian Student in Egypt Confounds Experts," *Guardian*, February 24, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/24/why-was-he-killed-brutal-death-of-italian-student-in-egypt-confounds-experts < https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/24/why-was-he-killed-brutal-death-of-italian-student-in-egypt-confounds-experts> . ↩

38. See for instance Nour Eltigani, "The Battle of the Races: Egypt's Media Syndicte Finally Took a Stand Against Racism," *Egyptian Streets*, May 29, 2019, https://egyptianstreets.com/2019/05/29/the-battle-of-the-races-egypts-media-syndicate-finally-took-a-stance-against-racism/ < https://egyptianstreets.com/2019/05/29/the-battle-of-the-races-egypts-media-syndicate-finally-took-a-stance-against-racism/> . ↩

39. "The Nada Zatouna Incident: The Strange Case of the Racist Egyptian Pharmacist that Came Out of Nowhere!!" *The Strange and the Marvelous* (blog), April 28, 2013, https://thedomainofthestrange.wordpress.com/2013/04/28/the-nada-zatouna-incident-the-strange-case-of-the-racist-egyptian-pharmacist-that-came-out-of-nowhere/ < https://thedomainofthestrange.wordpress.com/2013/04/28/the-nada-zatouna-incident-the-strange-case-of-the-racist-egyptian-pharmacist-that-came-out-of-nowhere/> . ↩

40. Minal Giri, "On Contagion: Sudanese Refugees, HIV/AIDS and the Social Order in Egypt," *Égypte/Monde arabe* 4 (2007): 179–198; Sunni M. Khalid, "Egypt's Race Problem," *The Root*, February 3, 2011, https://www.theroot.com/egypts-race-problem-1790862617 < https://www.theroot.com/egypts-race-problem-1790862617> ; Raman Sharif, "Jarīdat yīūm sābʿa tanshur taḥqīqan ʿunṣurīyyan b-ʿanwān n——s" ("Newspaper *The Seventh Day* Publishes Racist Report under the Title 'N——s'"), *Al-ʿunṣūriyya ḍid al-sūd fī miṣr wa al-ʿālam al-ʿarabī* (*Anti-Black Racism in Egypt and the Arab World*) (blog), January 16, 2015. < /جريدة-اليوم-السابع-تنشر-تحقيقا-عنصريا/blackinegypt.wordpress.com/2015/01/16//https: https://blackinegypt.wordpress.com/2015/01/16/%D8%AC%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B9-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%A7-%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7/> ; Valentina Primo, "'They Call Us Black and Filthy': Sudanese Refugees in Egypt, Trapped Between Racism and Violence," *Cairo Scene*, June 6, 2017, https://cairoscene.com/In-Depth/They-Call-Us-Black-and-Filthy-Sudanese-Refugees-in-Egypt-Trapped-Between-Racism-and-Violence < https://cairoscene.com/In-Depth/They-Call-Us-Black-and-Filthy-Sudanese-Refugees-in-Egypt-Trapped-Between-Racism-and-Violence> . (*Editors' note:* Lateral *does not generally print racial slurs, and accordingly, we have edited the display of the citation to Raman Sharif's blog post above.*) ↩

41. A 2015 report in *Cairo Scene* suggests that Black and dark-skinned individuals from powerful nations are routinely harassed in Egypt and their expertise and knowledge diminished. Valentina Primo, "The Reality of Racism in Egypt," *Cairo Scene*, August 5, 2015, https://cairoscene.com/LifeStyle/The-Reality-of-Racism-in-Egypt < https://cairoscene.com/LifeStyle/The-Reality-of-Racism-in-Egypt> . ↩

42. See also Seikaly, "Productive Discomforts." ↩

43. Eve Troutt Powell, "Egyptians in Blackface: Nationalism and the Representation of the Sudan in Egypt, 1919," *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 2, no. 2 (1995): 27–45. ↩

44. Powell Troutt, "Egyptians in Blackface"; see also Elizabeth Smith, "In His Heart and Soul He's Egyptian, the Nile Flows through His Veins: Bakkar as Egyptian and African," *Critical Interventions* 3, no. 1 (2009): 123–139 ↩

45. Pierre, *Predicament of Blackness*, 103. ↩

46. See for instance Nehal El Meligy, "America is Grey-Blind: When I'm Here, I'm Black," *Egyptian Streets*, May 21, 2018, https://egyptianstreets.com/2018/05/21/america-is-grey-blind-when-im-here-im-black/ < https://egyptianstreets.com/2018/05/21/america-is-grey-blind-when-im-here-im-black/> . ↩

Author Information

Shayna Silverstein

Shayna Silverstein is Assistant Professor of Performance Studies at Northwestern University. Her research examines the politics and aesthetics of sound and movement in the contemporary Middle East, with a focus on Syria. Her recent and forthcoming publications include essays in *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, *Performance Matters*, *Music & Politics*, *Remapping Sound Studies* (Duke Press), *Punk Ethnography* (Wesleyan Press), and an audiography in *[in]Transition: Journal of Videographic Film & Moving Image*. Her current book project analyzes the ethos of movement (*ḥarake* in Syrian Arabic) and politics of performance, specifically how Syrian *dabke*, a popular dance music suffused with cultural memory and nationhood, has paradoxically contributed to isolation and fragmentation within Syrian society throughout the recent conflict. Her research has been supported by the Fulbright Program, Woodrow Wilson Foundation, Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities, and Buffett Institute at Northwestern University.

View all of Shayna Silverstein's articles.

Darci Sprengel

Darci Sprengel is a Junior Research Fellow in Music at the University of Oxford. Her first book manuscript in progress, *"Postponed Endings:" Youth Music and Affective Politics in Post-Revolution Egypt*, examines DIY music in Egypt in relation to notions of desirable political action within conditions of military-capitalism. She has two additional research projects. The first analyzes music streaming technologies in the Global South using a feminist and critical race approach to digital media. The second explores the influence of sub-Saharan African culture in Egyptian popular culture, interrogating the politics of Arab anti-Blackness through the lens of critical race theory. She received her PhD in ethnomusicology with a concentration in gender studies from the University of California, Los Angeles, and her publications appear or are forthcoming in *Popular Music*; *Culture, Theory & Critique*; *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, and *Sound Studies*. She has taught at the University of Oxford, Beloit College, The American University in Cairo, and UCLA.

View all of Darci Sprengel's articles.